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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 8 May 1990, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia)

- General exchange of views

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic): On behalf of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at this year's session and to wish you success in the discharge of the duties of that responsible office. Your outstanding diplomatic skills and your many years of experience in the multilateral disarmament field are a guarantee to us that you will succeed in guiding the activities of the Commission at this decisive stage. Let me assure you and the other Commission officers, whom I also wish to congratulate upon their election, of the full support of my delegation in the work before us.

Allow me to take this opportunity to explain positions of the Government of the German Democratic Republic - a Government resulting from the free and democratic elections of 18 March last - on disarmament and security policy issues.

It is the firm determination of the Government of the German Democratic Republic to be in the vanguard of the disarmament process. At this stage of the process of détente, there is, in our view, an inseparable link between disarmament and defence policies. In its approach to issues relating to security and military policies, the German Democratic Republic is guided by the idea that the legitimate security interests of all States involved, in particular the Soviet Union, should not be interfered with by the process of German unification. At the end of this process there should be more security and more stability for all than there is today.

Forty-five years ago today the Second World War ended with the victory of the allies of the anti-Hitler coalition. We fully appreciate the share of the allied Powers France, the United Kingdom and the United States, and of other nations, in the liberation of Germany from fascism, just as we commend the unforgettable contribution of the Soviet Union.

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

The lessons of history urge us to recognize that there is no task more important today than that of safeguarding peace as a prerequisite for the resolution of all other pressing global problems.

From the present-day situation the Government of the German Democratic Republic deduces the following conclusions and objectives:

We consider it our task to pursue a policy which promotes the process by which military alliances would be superseded by structures that transcend alliances, as a first step towards a pan-European security system. The Vienna seminar on military doctrines, held last January within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process, was a hopeful and useful contribution to that end.

It is the aim of the Government of the German Democratic Republic to reduce drastically the National People's Army and give it a strictly defensive orientation. The relevant programmes and measures have already been initiated.

The German Democratic Republic formally renounces the production, spread, possession and deployment of nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons.

The German Democratic Republic is in favour of a global ban on chemical weapons as early as this year.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic will take immediate measures to restrict, as a first step, and completely cease in the foreseeable future the production and export of weapons.

There is a chance in 1990 to achieve progress in many fields where disarmament and security policies are concerned. We hope for the favourable conclusion this year of the negotiations under the strategic arms reduction talks (START) on a 50 per cent cut in strategic nuclear weapons between the Soviet Union and the

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(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

United States. The overall process of nuclear disarmament must go on. Urgently awaited is the ratification of the agreement between the USSR and the United States on a substantial reduction in the number and yield of their nuclear test explosions. A conference on the expansion of the 1963 Moscow Treaty on the banning of nuclear tests in the three environments is under preparation. The Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be held in September 1990.

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating body in this field, is working intensively towards completion of the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and towards clearing away the remaining obstacles.

In this context, this year's session of the Disarmament Commission is of particular importance. It should become a turning-point in the Commission's history. General Assembly resolution 44/119 C, which my delegation joined in sponsoring and which was adopted by consensus, requests us to make every effort to achieve specific recommendations at this session on the outstanding items on our agenda. At the same time, a package of reform measures to enhance the functioning of the Commission was adopted in the annex to that resolution. It is at this session that we shall lay the groundwork for the successful implementation of those measures. That is especially true of the moves envisaged with regard to the agenda, the establishment of future subsidiary bodies and the organization of work of the sessions. My delegation will work actively for the realization of the package of reforms.

Let me make a few remarks on our consideration of items on the agenda of this year's session.

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

As regards item 4, which concerns various aspects of nuclear disarmament, it should be possible to achieve consensus on the draft referring to various fields of disarmament, given in particular the ongoing bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States. The revised compilation of proposals for recommendations submitted last year by the Chairman of the Contact Group, Mr. Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, contains in parts I and II wording from most of which the brackets have already been removed. This should serve as a basis for us to work on.

The consultations taking place under your experienced guidance, Mr. Chairman, on item 7 - "Naval armaments and disarmament" - are, as we all know, not undisputed; in our view, however, they concern substantive issues, for they refer to an essential element of military capabilities which cannot be excluded from the world-wide disarmament process for all time. It seems to us that maritime confidence-building measures and elements of a multilateral agreement on the prevention of incidents at sea are particularly suitable for discussion in the current deliberations.

The consideration of item 8, concerning conventional disarmament, deserves special attention this year for several reasons. The formulations contained in document A/CN.10/CRP.1/Rev.5 of 24 May 1989 offer, we believe, a sound foundation for a concluding document acceptable to all sides. The forthcoming discussion could include comments on the defensive nature of security concepts and the relevant security structures as well as the experience gained in the process of regional disarmament, such as the Vienna negotiations. In the context of conventional disarmament, national conversion measures and the international exchange of experience in this field, particularly in the framework of the United Nations, are taking on added significance. Relevant efforts are being made in my country.

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

We welcome the fact that negotiations on item 10 - "Objective information on military matters" - are to start pursuant to resolution 44/116 E. In the view of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, which supports this resolution, greater transparency and information in the military field could make a significant contribution towards reducing mistrust and confrontation and towards promoting the process of disarmament. It seems to us advisable that in the first phase of the consultations on this item we come to an understanding on a detailed mandate for its future substantive consideration, structure and objectives.

The German Democratic Republic considers the Disarmament Commission to be an important forum for the dialogue on disarmament issues, the promotion of the world-wide disarmament process and the drafting of relevant recommendations.

My delegation will assist to the best of its abilities in ensuring that the various subsidiary organs work in a constructive and result-oriented way.

Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria): May I begin by extending my delegation's and my own congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship. We are confident that your outstanding competence and long experience in disarmament matters are assets that can ensure a successful outcome of the work of this important United Nations body. I pledge the full co-operation of my delegation and myself in assisting you in your activities.

The present session of the Disarmament Commission is being held within a particularly dynamic international political framework, which favours the discussion of the main disarmament topics. Like other Eastern European States, the People's Republic of Bulgaria has decisively chosen the path of radical reforms in its social and political life, including its foreign policy. We can all feel the fresh winds of liberalized relations between States, whereby policies of strength

(Mr. Tarabanov, Bulgaria)

give way to freer communication. Life today requires changes in our traditional approaches to national and international security concepts alike.

Bulgaria supports the formation of a basically new European security system, with existing military-political alliances gradually being replaced by non-alliance formations having political functions only. We must first provide the necessary legal guarantees in order to establish in Europe such a collective security system as will provide for extending assistance, including military aid, to all participating States. In this connection I would draw attention to the proposal submitted by the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic on reviving the United Nations role in European affairs and to the initiatives of other countries, including the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy and Poland, aimed at institutionalizing the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process and at creating new structures.

Military force, which was for long an important factor in international life, is now giving way to such tested political instruments as dialogue, mutual understanding and co-operation. There is no alternative to building the military component of security on the secure foundations of non-offensive defence and reasonable sufficiency.

The Soviet-American dialogue largely determines the status of the international community as a whole. We hope that the forthcoming Gorbachev-Bush summit will foster the conclusion of agreements on halting the arms race and on disarmament.

The recent proposals made by the United States Administration are conducive to such an outcome. Bulgaria welcomes in particular the proposal to cancel modernization plans for short-range nuclear missiles, as well as the proposals to advance the timetable for opening negotiations with the Soviet Union about reducing

(Mr. Tarabanov, Bulgaria)

and subsequently eliminating short-range nuclear weapons in Europe and for the transformation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) into more of a political organization. Similar proposals on talks on nuclear tactical weapons have been made by the Soviet Union, and the Warsaw Treaty Organization summit has discussed ways to transform the role of that organization. This concurrence of ideas in such a vital area as disarmament is indeed encouraging.

(Mr. Tarabanov, Bulgaria)

The United Nations effectiveness in the field of disarmament should also be promoted based on a broader implementation of the multilateral approach aimed at strengthening peace, security and co-operation. The United Nations Disarmament Commission has an important role to play in this field. We are very much satisfied at yesterday's adoption by the Commission of document A/CN.10/137, entitled "Ways and Means to Enhance the Functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which we regard as a turning-point in the work of this important United Nations body in the field of disarmament.

We share the view that following the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - and the resumption of the strategic arms reduction talks (START) we have witnessed an important breakthrough in nuclear disarmament. Both the chance and the need to internationalize nuclear disarmament have considerably increased. Vast scope for action in this field is open to both the other nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States.

The establishment of an effective verification system to ensure strict compliance with the agreements reached is an urgent task awaiting an early solution.

A comprehensive nuclear-test ban is another disarmament priority. The forthcoming entry into force of the 1974 and 1976 Soviet-American treaties on the limitation of nuclear explosions should at last provide the Conference on Disarmament with the stimulus to resume negotiations on matters relating to a comprehensive and complete nuclear-test ban. May I also stress the importance of the Fourth Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is our view that that Conference should strengthen the non-proliferation régime, enhance the nuclear disarmament process and ultimately create conditions for broad international co-operation in the peaceful uses of the atom.

(Mr. Tarabanov, Bulgaria)

My delegation feels optimistic about the ongoing negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. Obviously, the earliest conclusion of a Soviet-American agreement on chemical disarmament would prove instrumental in speeding up those negotiations. The draft multilateral convention in this area contains a large number of agreed-upon texts. That is why we believe that all we need is one last effort this year - and if necessary next year - to finalize the text and to submit it to the United Nations General Assembly for approval.

My country follows with satisfaction the rapid progress at the conventional force reduction negotiations in Vienna. Major headway has been made in areas which formerly lacked international or national experience. These favourable developments should also be attributed to the parties' common political will to finalize the text so that the first ever treaty on conventional weapons and armaments may be signed this autumn.

Some of the remaining differences are substantial and hamper the negotiating process; also, there are technical details which must be agreed upon. However, we are worried not so much by differences in individual countries' positions - for they can be overcome - as by the huge amount of work which remains to be done.

Despite existing difficulties, the People's Republic of Bulgaria is optimistic about the successful outcome of the negotiations and about the signing of the treaty at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) summit meeting at the end of this year.

The Bulgarian delegation holds the view that further progress in disarmament and the strengthening of international security will strongly depend on the adoption of measures to increase confidence at sea, to guarantee freedom and security of navigation and to restrict and limit naval activities. Concrete proof

(Mr. Tarabanov, Bulgaria)

of our efforts in this field is the forthcoming conference on confidence-building at sea, which will be held in Varna, Bulgaria, in September, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Bulgaria pays particular attention to the conversion of military potentials and believes that the United Nations can play an important role in the consideration and resolving of these matters. May I remind the Commission that at the last session of the United Nations General Assembly Bulgaria was the author of a relevant resolution which was adopted practically by consensus. In 1989 my country's military budget was cut by 12 per cent. By the end of this year we envisage unilateral reductions in the armed forces. Bulgaria neither produces nor has stocks of any weapons of mass destruction. The conversion of our military potential covers exclusively conventional armaments and combat equipment; in fact, it is already in progress. The delegation of Bulgaria considers that conversion is inseparable from the disarmament process and that efforts should be internationalized with a view to its successful outcome. The practical elaboration of specific conversion patterns can take place only within the framework of international co-operation, with the United Nations playing an important role.

Following that line of thought and taking account of the need to update the Commission's agenda, my delegation would like to sound out, in a preliminary way, the views of other interested parties on the advisability of including the question of conversion of military potentials in the Commission's agenda for 1991.

To conclude, I should like to inform the Commission that this year the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria submitted data on military expenditures on the basis of the United Nations instrument for standardized international reporting of military expenditures. My country believes that objective information and openness on military matters is an important prerequisite

(Mr. Tarabanov, Bulgaria)

for greater confidence among States, for strengthening international security and for reaching effective results in the disarmament process on a global and a regional scale.

The delegation of Bulgaria will fully co-operate in the Disarmament Commission's work at this responsible stage of development in international relations. We are confident that the international community will act likewise.

Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania): Let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Commission. Your experience and personal diplomatic skills will undoubtedly guide us through a productive and successful session. I wish also to express the appreciation of my delegation to your predecessor, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire, for the outstanding manner in which he guided our work during last year's session.

The task of the Commission at this session, as we all realize, is quite pressing. We are to deliberate on seven substantive agenda items in a limited time. Moreover, the challenge before us is to make the Commission live up to the letter and spirit of General Assembly resolution 44/119 C which, among other things, requested the Commission to make every effort to conclude the outstanding items on its agenda at this session. Indeed, that must be our objective as well, particularly considering that some of the outstanding items have been on the agenda for over a decade.

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

My delegation rejects the attempts by some delegations to steer the direction of the agenda away from issues that are of great significance to the majority of mankind. At a time when the international atmosphere offers great hopes for disarmament, our task should not be limited only to restating our well-known fundamental positions. It must involve a serious and constructive search to reconcile the differing points of view in the interest of mankind. The international community has already set itself several tasks and established priorities in the field of disarmament which could only be fulfilled with the participation of all nations, big and small.

It should be borne in mind that in the nuclear age and in the world of interdependence, as the Palme Commission very aptly underlined, "there can be no alternative to negotiation and co-operation among nations". To have meaning, that co-operation should underscore the indispensability of multilateralism. In the field of disarmament, the United Nations has unquestionably a central role to play. This underlines the significance of item 6 on our agenda. The Disarmament Commission, unlike other United Nations General Assembly subsidiary bodies, is composed of the entire United Nations membership where all Members have their say in its proceedings and where, therefore, multilateralism is at its best in the disarmament field. Given the necessary political will, we should be able to adopt joint recommendations.

Since the last session, the world has witnessed vast changes in the international arena. The traditional military alliances of the two Power blocs are now standing the test of time as the fall of the Berlin Wall and a wind of political change in Eastern Europe has ushered in a new political climate in Europe. The spirit of realism, which was instilled by the Soviet Union's new

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

thinking, has been sustained. The two super-Powers are now engaged in preparations for the forthcoming summit to which the international community looks with much anticipation and hope. It is our hope that the agreement in principle for a 50-per-cent reduction in their strategic weapons will be translated into a binding agreement. We welcome the prospect, even though we are well aware that there will still remain in their arsenals enough weapons to destroy the world many times over.

In disarmament negotiations, both bilateral and multilateral initiatives and measures are indispensable and both must be designed to be mutually complementary. It becomes necessary, therefore, to emphasize that, while we welcome those bilateral negotiations now in progress between the two super-Powers, they should not be allowed to substitute or replace the multilateral disarmament efforts. In this connection, the rest of the international community has the right to demand that the Commission be enabled effectively to discharge its functions as entrusted to it by the General Assembly. The agenda before us constitutes some of the pressing issues of our time, which I hope will be finalized with concrete and useful recommendations to the General Assembly.

One such issue is the item on South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability, to which my delegation attaches great importance. Despite the obvious threat that South Africa's nuclear capability constitutes to international peace and security, and in particular to the security of African States, and the increasing danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons over the years, the Disarmament Commission has been unable to reach consensus on this important item. The protectors of and collaborators with the racist régime have for a decade now consistently frustrated every effort intended to alert the Security Council to the threat to which the General Assembly has accorded a very high priority.

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

There is genuine concern among countries on the African continent, particularly the front-line States and other neighbouring countries, over recent reports on the military nature of collaboration between the racist régime and Israel in the nuclear field. We hope the Secretary-General will submit to the Commission a preliminary report as requested by the General Assembly. The nuclear-weapon Powers that have assisted both Israel and South Africa to acquire a nuclear-weapon capability, have made several appeals to countries, like Tanzania, to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). How are we supposed to react to these appeals when the same Powers which have influence and power fail to put pressure on South Africa to accede to the NPT and to persuade it to submit its nuclear installations for inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency? To ensure the survival of the NPT, to secure wider respect for it as well as its universal acceptance, the nuclear-weapon Powers should show more serious commitment towards non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, both horizontal and vertical.

We are not talking about a theoretical South African nuclear capability. Everybody knows the truth and media reports bear testimony to it. Representatives of the régime have bragged about this capability. But it is more than that. The evidence that South Africa has acquired nuclear weapons is overwhelming. On the other hand, no one has even suggested that any of South Africa's neighbours has acquired a nuclear capability, much less nuclear weapons. It is absurd for some forces to worry about a non-existing threat from South Africa's neighbours while ignoring the real threat posed by the régime.

Peace and security cannot coexist with apartheid. Despite the optimism generated by recent developments in South Africa, the régime has not dismantled the main pillars of apartheid or abandoned its acts of aggression and hostility against

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

its peaceful neighbours. We should, therefore, not relax vigilance against that evil system. It is my delegation's fervent hope that under the able leadership of the Chairman of the Working Group on the item, Ambassador Rana of Nepal, the Commission will be able to elaborate and adopt recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly.

The nuclear disarmament items certainly remain a priority. The draft recommendations on issues of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament are still before us. For years the Commission has not been able to reach a conclusion on various proposals due to the divergence of views between the nuclear-weapon Powers and the non-nuclear-weapon States. It is my delegation's hope that, in the spirit of the emerging rapprochement between the East and the West and the new trend in disarmament negotiation efforts, we shall be able to make headway on item 4 of our agenda. Nuclear weapons still constitute the gravest threat to humanity. We can ensure the safety of mankind if we heed this truth through concrete action. Tanzania has always disputed the view that nuclear weapons have preserved world peace for 45 years. Peace, we believe, has been maintained by the sheer interest of all nations in survival. It is a fact of life, particularly military life, that weapons owned are weapons liable to be used, whether on land or at sea. The pressing need to negotiate and conclude a comprehensive multilateral nuclear-test-ban treaty arises from the fact that nuclear-weapon testing fuels the nuclear-arms race and increases the danger of nuclear war. As such, no one is safe from a nuclear war until all nuclear weapons have been eliminated. A ban on all nuclear-weapon tests would de-escalate the nuclear-arms race and greatly reduce the risk of a nuclear war. This widely shared position should, indeed, continue to guide us throughout our deliberations.

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

While it is the nuclear-arms race that poses an immediate danger to the survival of mankind, the conventional arms race cannot be overlooked. It is said that the third world bears more than its share of blame with regard to conventional armaments. We are in that way reminded from time to time that conventional arms which have killed millions since the invention of gun-powder should be dealt with with the utmost priority. While we understand and share some of the views, conventional arms should not in any way be used as an excuse for not moving forward in nuclear arms reduction and disarmament.

We recognize that the task which lies ahead for the Chairman of the group working on the item on conventional disarmament is not an easy one. But with the necessary political will of all members, nothing is insurmountable. As the perceived military threat from the two military alliances, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact, fades, and as progress is made in Vienna on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe, the adoption of concrete recommendations on the item is not a far cry.

We all agree that last year's session was disappointing for all of us. This session cannot afford to end with another setback. In order to maintain the credibility of the Commission, we need to show constructive results, on the outstanding items in particular. This calls for collective action by all members of the Commission.

I wish to assure you, Sir, of the continued co-operation of my delegation.

Mr. AHMED (Pakistan): I should like to begin by conveying our felicitations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the office of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and to assure you of my delegation's co-operation and support in the discharge of your onerous responsibilities. We are confident that

(Mr. Ahmed, Pakistan)

under your able guidance our deliberations will be constructive, useful and marked with success.

The rapid pace of developments in recent months has infused a sense of optimism in the global environment. The ongoing disarmament talks between the two super-Powers have contributed to the improvement in the international climate, and we can now look forward to the future with greater hope.

The horror of total elimination of life on Earth and the spectre of a nuclear holocaust none the less continue to haunt mankind. It is therefore of vital importance that the two super-Powers continue their current negotiations for major reductions in their nuclear arsenals, leading ultimately to the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. When the necessary political will is available, problems of a technical nature do not present insurmountable hurdles to the conclusion of disarmament agreements.

General and complete disarmament has been on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission for a long period of time. It addresses an area of vital concern to the international community. In its work on this agenda item, the Disarmament Commission needs to develop upon the consensus reached in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and upon the gains which resulted from the second and third special sessions by recommending meaningful and concrete measures within the context of the objectives of general and complete disarmament.

In the nuclear field, there is an urgent need for measures such as a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We feel that maximum possible benefit should be derived from the positive turn in the super-Power relationship in order to arrive at an agreement banning all forms of testing of nuclear weapons for all times. It is with this objective in mind that Pakistan has lent its support to the initiative

(Mr. Ahmed, Pakistan)

to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. No doubt the response of the nuclear-weapon States will be a litmus test of their intentions.

The Government of Pakistan has reaffirmed time and again at the highest level its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. Pakistan has repeatedly demonstrated this commitment through initiatives, which have been taken both at the global and regional levels, aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

In the endeavour to keep the world free of nuclear weapons, Pakistan supports all efforts for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world. The creation of such zones has been recognized in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament as an important interim measure of disarmament pending general and complete disarmament which remains the final goal of all States. Pakistan's proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia is designed to keep our region free of nuclear weapons and to promote the objective of non-proliferation.

Pakistan is firm in its resolve to keep the South Asian region free of nuclear weapons. In South Asia, nuclear proliferation concerns are the result of a history of regional tensions and conflicts which feed upon mutual suspicions. The solution lies in the regional approach to disarmament with each State accepting equal and non-discriminatory obligations. It is the regional approach which, in our view, can provide an effective answer to the problems and save the poor masses of South Asia from wasting their limited and precious resources on a futile nuclear-arms race.

We are prepared to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty simultaneously with India; to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on our

(Mr. Ahmed, Pakistan)

nuclear programme simultaneously with India; to conclude a bilateral agreement with India for the mutual inspection of each other's nuclear facilities; to make a joint declaration with India renouncing nuclear weapons; and to enter into a regional or bilateral nuclear-weapon-test-ban agreement with India.

Pakistan is ready to accept any equitable and non-discriminatory agreement, with effective verification arrangements, that could commit the countries of the region in a legally binding manner not to acquire or produce nuclear weapons. Conscious of the important Role the United Nations has to play in the disarmament field, we have also proposed that in order to explore the possibility of such an agreement a conference on nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia be convened under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of the regional and other interested States.

Non-nuclear-weapon States have for a long time been seeking assurances against the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Pakistan has been in the forefront in seeking such assurances, as it is our belief that any State which forgoes the nuclear option has the right to receive security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Ahmed, Pakistan)

Those assurances would also serve the objective of non-proliferation by providing a sense of security to the non-nuclear-weapon States and obviating the need for them to seek nuclear weapons. However, we have not been able to move forward in this area after reaching a consensus on the common-formula approach. In our view, this deadlock can be broken if the concerned nuclear-weapon States were to review their policies and adopt revised positions that respond positively to the legitimate concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

The need to limit and reduce conventional weapons, armed forces, and military budgets is increasingly being felt across the world. The attention and concern that those issues are now receiving should be welcomed. The anxiety over the escalation of global expenditure on conventional armed forces and weapons, which accounts for four-fifths of the total amount spent on armaments, can no longer be ignored. In the area of conventional disarmament as well, it is the regional approach that offers the most realistic prospects for success.

The impulse towards high military spending in a region derives in large part from local factors, from unresolved territorial disputes, denial of the right to self-determination and other human rights, ambitions for regional hegemony, foreign occupation, or military intervention. The aim of a regional disarmament process should be to establish a mutually acceptable military equilibrium among the regional States and to exclude foreign military presence.

In determining such a balance, the capacity of each State for indigenous production of armaments, acquisition from external sources, and the level of sophistication of arms should be taken into account. Measures to create a regional balance could include the renunciation of certain types of deadly and advanced weapons, the elimination of the capability to launch surprise attacks, and large-scale military manoeuvres and geographical restrictions on the deployment of armed forces.

(Mr. Ahmed, Pakistan)

In many regions, the arms race is fuelled by the efforts of the militarily strong States to attain a position of unchallenged superiority. This can only exacerbate tensions, increase the danger of conflict, and thereby condemn the States of the region to a vicious circle of ever-increasing levels of forces and armaments and diminished security. The States that are in a dominant military position in a particular region therefore bear a special responsibility to promote and initiate arms limitations and reductions.

Pakistan supports all efforts aimed at ensuring the equal and undiminished security of States at the lowest level of armaments and military expenditures. It also supports efforts to ban illegal transfers of arms and arms sales to the drug barons and their terrorist mercenaries.

Pakistan believes that every country has the sovereign right to determine its own legitimate defence needs. The arms-exporting countries cannot assume this right as regards the arms-importing or non-weapon-producing countries.

In our view, the question of arms transfers should be considered within the overall context of conventional arms control. We must bear in mind its other inseparable and integrally linked aspects, particularly the indigenous defence production capabilities of different countries as well as the legitimate security concerns of States. Those aspects must be taken into account simultaneously and in an integrated manner.

In Pakistan's view, piecemeal conventional-arms-control measures address only a single aspect of a multi-faceted issue or are discriminatory. They cannot be implemented and are bound to fail. That is particularly true as regards the measures that focus on international arms transfers while neglecting the issue of the indigenous defence production capabilities.

(Mr. Ahmed, Pakistan)

Many small and medium-sized States, lacking indigenous defence production capabilities, have no choice but to rely on international transfers of arms to meet their essential security needs. In some cases, they perceive threats to their security emanating from States with large indigenous defence production capabilities. Obviously, the denial to such small and medium-sized States of the possibility of acquiring arms through international transfers would endanger their security and have a destabilizing effect on international peace and security.

The international community must therefore guard against any attempts to isolate and highlight only one aspect of conventional arms control, namely international arms transfers, while ignoring the aforementioned aspects.

In our view, the collection of information on military matters concerning all States - that is, the nuclear-weapon States, the large, militarily significant States, and the small, militarily weaker States - would create some problems for the smaller States. In our view, the availability of information on military matters through an international reporting system could work against the security interests of the smaller States. While those States would not acquire any benefit from the information they receive regarding the military capability of the bigger States, the same information concerning the small States could be used to their disadvantage by the bigger States seeking regional and global hegemony and influence.

The Disarmament Commission has examined the question of military budgets since 1979. Efforts have been made over the past years to evolve a set of principles that would govern the actions of States to freeze and reduce military budgets. In our view, the adoption of arbitrary criteria to freeze or cut military spending without addressing the security anxieties of the States concerned is not realistic. The recommendations evolved by the Disarmament Commission must, in

(Mr. Ahmed, Pakistan)

particular, give due consideration to the security concerns of small developing and non-aligned States and their regional security perspectives.

The wide disparity between the armaments expenditure of militarily strong States and other countries is beyond question. A reduction in military budgets, therefore, should be initiated by those States that possess massive military arsenals.

The escalation in the naval arms and armaments of some States, both in quantity and quality, beyond their legitimate requirements of coastal defence, has caused smaller States to feel insecure and threatened. The expansion and modernization of naval forces continues with the increased sophistication of sea-based weapons systems and the deployment at sea of nuclear weapons, both strategic and tactical, and the introduction of nuclear-powered submarines has given an alarming capability to the navies of a few States. Consequently, the security of the small and medium-sized coastal States is now threatened from the sea on an unprecedented scale. The question of naval disarmament and the imposition of restrictions on the military uses of the high seas therefore deserves to be addressed urgently.

Pakistan supports the denuclearization of Africa, where South Africa's nuclear capability increasingly poses a grave threat to the security of the African nations. The Non-Aligned Movement has condemned the economic, military and nuclear co-operation of certain countries with the South African racist régime. Such collusion could only frustrate the objective of the denuclearization of Africa.

(Mr. Ahmed, Pakistan)

This year the Disarmament Commission has been asked by the General Assembly to prepare the outline of a draft resolution to be entitled "Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade" and to submit it to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. At a time when the international situation is increasingly amenable to the promotion of disarmament measures and at a time when the ongoing political processes in various parts of the world are contributing to a lessening of international tensions, the declaration of a third disarmament decade will undoubtedly reinforce global efforts for a more secure but less armed world. We hope that the Disarmament Commission will be successful in preparing the necessary elements for such a draft resolution.

Disarmament efforts can advance an improved international-security situation. The resolution of underlying political problems and conflicts and the removal of mistrust are essential for the creation of the international climate in which disarmament efforts can proceed meaningfully and achieve the desired results. This can best be done by strict adherence to the universally recognized principles enjoining respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, non-use of force in inter-State relations and peaceful settlement of disputes.

The majority of the world's population lives below the poverty line and is beset with hunger, disease and economic deprivation. It is towards that urgent problem that our energies and efforts should be directed, and it is against that menace that our wars should be waged. An arms race can only result in destruction of all life on Earth. We must reassert our humanity and save ourselves and our future generations from total destruction and annihilation.

Mr. OWOSENI (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation offers sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the 1990

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

session of the Disarmament Commission. As a distinguished representative of Indonesia, with which my country enjoys very cordial relations, we are optimistic that your vast diplomatic skill in multilateral disarmament will ensure the successful outcome of our deliberations. May I also extend our tribute to the other officers of the Commission, including its Rapporteur from Tanzania.

Your election comes at a momentous period in the history of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. For the first time since the Commission was established under a new mandate of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly unanimously adopted, at its forty-fourth session, a resolution with far-reaching implications on ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission. Part of the pertinent resolution - General Assembly resolution 44/119 C, of 15 December 1989 - mandated this session of the Disarmament Commission to complete all outstanding items on its agenda, some of which have been consistently featured for over 10 years without agreement. In essence this session acquires a special significance because of its unique responsibility of having been cast as the midwife of the rejuvenated Disarmament Commission to emerge at the 1991 session.

Furthermore, the months that have passed since the last session of the Disarmament Commission have been unique in history, for during them we have witnessed the most dramatic political developments in various parts of the world since 1945. Those developments would have been unthinkable at this time last year. Worthy of mention are the political changes in Eastern Europe, southern Africa and Central America, which have contributed positively to improvements in international relations and to the relaxation of East-West tension and ideological rivalries, political differences and military competition. While some of these developments are still under way, with greater ramifications for the future, there

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

is no doubt that as a whole they represent significant landmarks that are capable of reorienting the world from the cold-war era to what we can view as a favourable international political climate. Certainly, these positive changes would be expected to have some salutary effect on our deliberations at this session.

In our part of the world the proverbial wind of change is also blowing over southern Africa. After several decades of colonial domination and illegal occupation by apartheid South Africa, Namibia is today an independent sovereign State under democratically elected leaders. My delegation would like to avail itself of this opportunity to welcome into our midst the representatives of the Namibian nation who, against all the odds stacked against them by racist repression, refused to be cowed and are today representing the proud 160th Member of the United Nations.

The lessons of history and the inescapable freedom of a determined people are surely not lost on apartheid South Africa, apostle of institutionalized racism. The release of Nelson Mandela and other prominent members of the black leadership, the unbanning of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the recent meeting between the latter and the white minority leadership under De Klerk, inter alia, demonstrate that a truly free and democratic South Africa is just a question of time.

While we welcome all those changes around the world, it is however appropriate to remind ourselves that all is not yet well. Thus, enduring peace can only be erected on a foundation of an integrated approach to the questions of peace, security and disarmament. Peace is an indivisible entity, and its realization demands conscious contributions by all nations, big or small, involving positive changes in national perceptions, attitudes, doctrines and beliefs relating to the vital questions of security. Thus, we still have a long way to go, and we cannot

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

therefore afford to be complacent until the goals of genuine disarmament are reached.

At the present session we will again be confronted, as we were at the 1989 session, with the same agenda items, save for one new item, "Objective information on military matters". Hence we will once again discuss the same old issues of nuclear disarmament, South Africa's nuclear capability, the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, naval armaments and disarmament, conventional disarmament and the declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade. This time, of course, as General Assembly resolution 44/119 C stipulates, we will either finish with them successfully or agree to suspend them from the Disarmament Commission's agenda for some time. The item on the declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade, if we are to go by the examples set in 1970 and 1980, will have to be concluded at this session at all costs, without any possibility of suspension, since the third decade actually begins with 1990.

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

To accomplish our task therefore requires the necessary political will, particularly on the part of the two super-Powers, the other nuclear-weapon States and the militarily significant States, which between them bear a disproportionately high responsibility for the huge arsenals of nuclear and conventional weapons and naval armaments, and for the attendant skyrocketing military expenditures. The process of global disarmament must begin with drastic reductions in those weapons and expenditures before we can talk of any meaningful contribution to international peace and security.

In spite of recent political changes, a sword of Damocles still hangs menacingly over the world. Over 50,000 nuclear weapons are still stocked in nations' arsenals. More nuclear weapons are still being developed, with greater precision, effectiveness and destructive capability. While the quantitative acquisition of nuclear weapons may be slowing down as a result of some recent agreements, the qualitative development of those weapons more than compensates through increased deadliness. Worse still, because of nuclear-capable submarines we have witnessed the geographical spread of nuclear weapons to various parts of the world's oceans, thus posing a great danger to peaceful maritime transactions and the security of non-nuclear developing countries. Above all, the danger of widespread proliferation is increasing, with many States having already acquired or busy acquiring nuclear weapons or a nuclear capability, including some aberrant régimes located in areas of regional tension.

Those sad developments are realities of 1990 and are naturally of great concern to Nigeria, as a part of Africa which in 1964 undertook a solemn declaration to make Africa a denuclearized continent. Now, 26 years later, Africa has not yet realized that dream because of the nuclear-weapons ambitions of apartheid South Africa and the machinations of some of its Western backers. That

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

South Africa has managed to acquire nuclear weapons today is the fault of those Western countries which have put their investment interests in the evil system of apartheid above human considerations and noble principles. At the heart of their tolerance of the apartheid system lies the obvious fact of Western racial solidarity with the white minority régime in South Africa - which would not have been so had the reverse been the case and had the oppressed majority Africans been white.

As we deliberate on the agenda item concerning South Africa's nuclear capability, my delegation hopes that there will be a change of heart by those that have propped up the apartheid régime and to date prevented any meaningful agreement on this item by the Disarmament Commission. Certainly, if De Klerk and his white minority Government are admitting the evils of apartheid, their supporters in the West should do no less and should rectify their past connivance. We believe that any evil system should be condemned and eradicated, no matter the colour of the perpetrators.

The Nigerian delegation therefore looks forward to the interim report by the Secretary-General, expected to be issued shortly, on the impact of General Assembly resolution 44/113 B of 15 December 1989 concerning the investigation into South Africa's evolution and developments in the nuclear field and missile technology, including the technical and other support received from Israel as well as other sources. It is our hope that the report will enrich our consideration of the item on South Africa's nuclear capability. We need not stress that, in spite of the changes taking place in southern Africa, apartheid as a policy is still a fact of life in South Africa while the régime's nuclear-weapon capability, with all its consequences for peace and security in Africa and for global non-proliferation efforts, has not diminished.

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

As an integral part of the world, entitled to peace and security, Africa will continue to call for sustained international pressure on South Africa until its abominable apartheid system is eradicated and freedom and democracy based on universal adult suffrage are enthroned. Without that achievement, South Africa will continue to be regarded as the greatest threat to our peace and security in Africa, irrespective of the régime's pronouncements. Thus, at this session the Disarmament Commission cannot afford to fail in its duty to declare itself to be on the side of the promotion of the freedom that is just around the corner for the South African majority as a harbinger of our attainment of the final objectives of peace, security and the denuclearization of the African continent.

Mr. HOU Zhitong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The current session of the Disarmament Commission, which is the first of the 1990s and which is taking place against the backdrop of tremendous changes in the international situation, has important significance. It is a great honour for us to consider, together with other delegations, questions of disarmament and security which concern the entire international community.

The Chinese delegation is pleased to see an eminent representative of a fellow Asian country, friendly Indonesia, in the Chair at this session. We wish to extend our congratulations to you, Sir. Your rich experience, outstanding diplomatic skills and profound knowledge of and constructive approach to disarmament give us reason to believe that you will guide this session to the achievement of fresh results. My congratuations go also to the other members of the Bureau on their elections. I wish also to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya for his great efforts when he presided over last year's session of the Commission.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

In the past two days we have listened attentively to statements by many delegations in which they presented their assessment of the current situation and set forth ideas and proposals relating to disarmament. Today we too should like to present our views, in the hope that we in the Commission can advance and deepen our deliberations by exploring the issues together.

Coming out of the complex and volatile decade of the 1980s, the world has now entered the new decade of the 1990s, in which opportunities and challenges, hopes and dangers all exist side by side. The peoples of all countries are persistent in their efforts to maintain world peace and security and seek stability and development. Some progress has been made in easing tensions in the military sphere and advancing the process of disarmament. At the same time, stern reality also shows that all is not quiet under heaven and that the world is far from being a tranquil place. The rivalry between different international forces, interference by big Powers in the internal affairs of some countries and the existence of complicated turbulence and unstable factors have given rise to concern and anxiety among the peoples of the world. Forces in Europe and the world at large are going through a period of splitting and realignment amid intricate contradictions and conflicts of interest.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

We are glad to note that, with changes on the world scene, new progress and achievements have been made in recent years in the field of disarmament, thanks to the efforts of the international community. The non-aligned, the neutral and the third world countries in large numbers desire peace and oppose war. They want relaxation of tension, and not aggravation of tension. They want stability and detest turbulence. They strongly demand a halt to the arms race between big Powers, and have put forward many reasonable propositions and proposals concerning nuclear and conventional disarmament and political settlement of armed conflicts, thus through their own actions making important contributions to maintaining peace and stability and realizing disarmament.

Both the ninth Non-Aligned Summit and the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session adopted some important documents and resolutions promoting peace and disarmament. The Disarmament Commission has further exerted its irreplaceable influence by overcoming difficulties along the road to progress and improving the efficiency of its work. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, as the sole global body for multilateral disarmament negotiations, is playing a uniquely important role. In particular, progress in the negotiation of a convention on chemical weapons has been achieved. The negotiations on conventional forces in Europe, as well as the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on strategic nuclear weapons and chemical weapons, have also made some headway, which we should welcome.

However, we must also be sober-minded and not fail to see that the progress is only preliminary and quite limited, and that there are still hardships and difficulties ahead. Pursuing the cause of maintaining peace and striving for disarmament, therefore, remains a long and arduous task.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

The most important agenda item of the current session is that concerning the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament. As we remember clearly, the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at successive sessions, as well as the documents of the special General Assembly sessions devoted to disarmament and of Disarmament Commission sessions, all point out emphatically that the super-Powers, which possess the largest arsenals in the world, have a special responsibility for halting the arms race and realizing disarmament. As everyone knows, what that means is that they should not only substantially reduce their armaments but also stop their qualitative arms race. It is highly relevant to stress this point today.

The super-Powers have now started to reduce the numbers of certain types of weapons in their arsenals. It would be welcome if such cuts were truly substantial. What must be noted, however, is that both parties have admitted recently that the target for their strategic nuclear-weapons reduction has been reduced from the original 50 per cent to the present 30 per cent. Even if they had indeed cut such weapons by half, they would still own more than 90 per cent of the total nuclear arsenals in the world, enough to destroy mankind many times. In their negotiations so far, both sides have kept evading the issue of a qualitative arms race. While constantly upgrading their conventional armaments, they are now replenishing their already huge nuclear arsenals with a new generation of nuclear weapons of improved accuracy, penetration and mobility, and their arms race is extending without let-up into outer space. This poses a serious threat to world peace and security. It is precisely for this reason that many small- and medium-sized countries have expressed widespread dissatisfaction and have demanded strongly that the big Powers possessing the largest arsenals fulfil in real earnest their special responsibility and obligations. That is the fundamental way to remove such grave threats to peace.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

The issues of preventing nuclear proliferation and the prohibition of nuclear testing, which are so closely related to the question of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, have aroused the concern of the international community. This is fully understandable.

I wish to reiterate here that China's principled position on the question of nuclear proliferation is consistent. In order to maintain world peace and international security, China does not advocate, encourage or engage in nuclear proliferation. In its co-operation with other countries in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, China has adopted a responsible attitude, requiring the recipient countries of its nuclear exports to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and ensuring that its own nuclear imports are used only for peaceful purposes. In 1988 the Chinese Government signed a voluntary offer agreement with the IAEA to place part of its nuclear energy installations under the Agency's safeguards.

The Chinese Government has decided to give favourable consideration to attending, as an observer, the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the same time, we, like the various non-aligned and neutral States, are opposed to the practice of going all out in the nuclear-arms race while refusing unconditionally to provide security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States on the one hand, and imposing unreasonable restrictions on international co-operation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in the name of preventing nuclear proliferation, on the other.

It has been China's consistent position that the question of South Africa's nuclear capability, a question of common concern to the international community, should be settled. We emphasize today that the time has come for a settlement of this question once and for all, without further delay.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

On the question of the prohibition of nuclear testing, I wish to reiterate that China understands the eager desire of the non-nuclear-weapon States for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban at an early date. China has always exercised the utmost restraint and prudence with regard to nuclear tests, and has conducted only a very limited number. Our policy is clear and positive: that the objective of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban should be reached in the context of an effective nuclear-disarmament process. The two nuclear super-Powers have conducted the most nuclear tests, amounting to 1,600 to date, and are continuing such tests many times a year. Therefore, the international community has urged them to take the lead in halting all nuclear tests and carrying out nuclear disarmament so as to create conditions for a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon tests.

"Naval armaments and disarmament" is another important item on the Commission's agenda at the current session. While negotiating to reduce nuclear and conventional armaments, the world's leading naval Powers have continued their naval arms race and their rivalry in the world's great oceans, spreading the nuclear threat to each and every one of them. The policy of gunboat diplomacy remains a threat to many countries. What is more, such an important question as naval disarmament has not been placed on the agenda of the disarmament talks of either the relevant military Powers or the two major military blocs. Instead, it has been artificially shelved. Over the years, because of obstruction, the Commission's deliberations on this question have seen no progress. It is only natural, therefore, that the international community is ever more concerned about the issue of naval armaments and disarmament, pointing out with greater emphasis that naval disarmament forms an important, integral part of nuclear and conventional disarmament, and should be addressed without delay.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

The preservation of peace and the realization of disarmament are the common demand of all countries in the world. It is China's consistent and principled position that disarmament and security are issues having a direct bearing on the vital interests of all countries and that therefore all countries, big or small, strong or weak, have an equal right and are equally entitled to participate in the discussion and settlement of those issues. Bilateral disarmament efforts and those involving a small number of countries are welcome, but they should not be used to belittle, reject or replace global, multilateral disarmament efforts. All such efforts should complement and promote each other. Peace and security in the world are indivisible and the security interests of all regions and all countries are equally important. It must be pointed out that any attempt to promote one's own security at the expense of the security of others and any practice intended to place the security of a few big Powers or that of a particular region above the security of the great majority of countries and regions is unjustifiable and will not succeed in the end. Only by ensuring the security of the world as a whole and seeking the common development of all countries can there be true and enduring peace and security.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is the only multilateral deliberative disarmament body open to all of the Members of the United Nations. It has a high degree of universality and authority and can reflect in a concentrated manner the wishes and concerns of the international community. Its recommendations of principles, adopted by consensus after extensive deliberation of the major issues in the field of disarmament, have an important significance in terms of advancing the disarmament process and guiding the various disarmament negotiations. In this respect the Commission has already had some positive achievements, thanks to the concerted efforts of all member States. However, for

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

reasons known to all, the great potential of the Commission has not been fully utilized. In this connection, we support the proposal made in last year's General Assembly resolution on the rationalization of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. What should be stressed is that the purpose of that resolution is to strengthen further this body, not to weaken it. It is our hope that by adopting certain appropriate measures of improvement, the Commission will be able to do its job with greater efficiency and in greater depth, so as to make greater contributions to realizing disarmament and safeguarding peace.

The tasks before this session are heavy and difficult. As requested by the resolution of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, we shall wind up consideration of six items on the agenda. After years of work we have laid a sound foundation, with consideration progress made on quite a few questions and with consensus well within reach on some of them. It is our hope that with continued endeavour substantive progress will be made at this session. The Chinese delegation will participate, together with other delegations, in the deliberations on all agenda items with a constructive approach, and will make its own positive contributions to the complete success of this session.

Mr. GARCIA MORITAN (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all, let me say, Sir, how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We have been friendly for a long time, and we have been involved in disarmament matters at New York and at Geneva, and also in joint efforts in many meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement. We feel sure that your extensive diplomatic experience will be very useful as you guide us here in the Commission.

The mandate given by the General Assembly to this session of the Commission gives us very specific tasks, and we are to conclude most of the agenda items at this session. You can count, Sir, on our full co-operation.

(Mr. Garcia Moritan, Argentina)

Experience seems to suggest that in the area of disarmament we can achieve something only when what is happening in the international arena is reflected in specific multilateral negotiations and agreements. From an objective point of view, things could not look better than they do now, and therefore it would be unpardonable if we were to fail to take advantage of the current circumstances and simply continue to disregard the actual situation, maintaining outdated opinions and positions. This presupposes careful reflection on the part of all delegations, particularly those who bear primary responsibility and must help to avoid unnecessary expenditures and loss of credibility for the process of disarmament itself.

Today, more than ever before, the motivating force of this process requires more imaginative and more comprehensive foundations. Basically, what is needed is a new logic. The international scene today suggests that there will be a change from the old world as we have known it in the last few decades. We feel that the seed of this new kind of world must respond not to the security interests of a handful of States but to the interests of the international community as a whole.

It must be recognized that some security doctrines and concepts and some of the pioneering instruments of past decades have now been overtaken by events. It is no longer rational to think that the causes of antagonism between States are immune to restraints on the use of force. The obvious reason is that we have now arrived at situation where it is possible to destroy the planet completely. Strategic competition requires a new kind of sophistication, and we must recognize that and not merely repeat the experiences of the past. Today we think it feasible to develop concepts and guidelines which in the past hardly seemed possible. Interrelationships and international co-operation in the area of security must replace confrontation and competition in international relations. Only a network

(Mr. Garcia Moritan, Argentina)

of shared interests can underlie lasting collective security. Institutionalizing such a network is a task for everybody. That means that we must rethink the ways to achieve the goal of disarmament and negotiate the relevant instruments to make it real and effective. We cannot have a clear vision of the disarmament process unless we strengthen the role of the United Nations in this area. The complexity of current changes requires a collective, creative and rational response. The efforts that have been made by the United Nations in this area and in resolving conflicts cannot be disregarded. Our Organization can increase its positive contributions both to deliberations and to negotiations, in the technical area and in the political area. As my delegation has said at earlier sessions of the Commission, this multilateral forum is the only body that can, in the final analysis, guarantee acceptable, balanced and non-discriminatory solutions.

(Mr. Garcia Moritan, Argentina)

This presupposes, inter alia, that we establish machinery that would make effective the complementarity that must exist between bilateral and multilateral negotations, including regional negotiations.

While we recognize that United Nations bodies dealing with disarmament can always be made better and more effective, we do believe that it is essential to preserve their present attribute. We support all efforts to increase the capacities and scope of action of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole negotiating forum, we are convinced that the deliberative work of the Disarmament Commission must be strengthened. Along these lines, we greatly appreciate the provisions of the annex to resolution 44/119 C, and we believe that this session will provide us with an important opportunity to generate new ideas.

A great deal has been said about our agenda. We believe that you, Mr. Chairman, with your diplomatic skills, can hold consultations for the substantive consideration of the agenda that will lead to practical results.

We attach great importance to agenda item 4 on nuclear and conventional disarmament. However, without trying to make definitive statements about particularly dynamic issues, we can at least say that the strategic competition between the super-Powers is slowly shifting away from the quantitative area that has been characteristic of it so far and is moving into the area of outer space. The growing anxiety caused by this suggests that this aspect should be the focus of our deliberations on agenda item 4.

Similar concerns have led us to stress the need to include the question of the naval arms race in the agenda. The geographical proliferation of nuclear weapons on the seas and oceans of the world and the linking of all weapons systems deployed in the different environments have given a new dimension to the question of naval armaments.

(Mr. Garcia Moritan, Argentina)

These and other considerations in connection with the naval arms race highlight the need for active international co-operation. This is particularly necessary in the area of transparency measures and confidence-building in the naval field. Here I may recall, by way of example, the joint statement by Argentina and the United Kingdom which was circulated as document A/45/136. We also appreciate the efforts made in this connection by the delegation of Sweden. We believe that the guidelines suggested at the last session on an international agreement for the prevention of incidents at sea are an important basis for the negotiation of multilateral agreements in this area.

We believe that it is necessary to do everything possible in every forum to put an end to the continuing inhuman policy of apartheid. Accordingly, we unreservedly support the idea of preventing the use or development of the nuclear capability of South Africa in its military aspects.

I should like to take this opportunity to say how pleased we were to see the Namibian delegation join the deliberations of this Commission. As States with coasts on the South Atlantic, we shall soon be working together at Lagos to promote and achieve the goals of the zone of peace and co-operation in the south Atlantic.

Turning to the question of conventional disarmament, we note with interest the postive tendency emerging in Europe at the Vienna talks. We hope that that tendency will crystallize in specific agreements and that other equally important Powers will initiate similar talks.

We believe that the Commission, in considering this item, should take as a basis the provisions of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Lastly, in connection with the new agenda item, entitled "Objective information on military matters", I may mention that Argentina, for the sixth

(Mr. Garcia Moritan, Argentina)

consecutive year, has submitted data to the Secretary-General on our military expenditures using the relevant standardized instrument. We feel that such actions constitute an important step forward towards increasing transparency and building confidence in this area.

My delegation is optimistic about this session. We appeal to all delegations to reflect on these matters and take account of the exceptional times in which we are living. We appeal to them to minimize differences so that we can successfully conclude our consideration of most of the items now before us.

Mr. CHADHA (India): Sir, the Indian delegation would like to extend its warm felicitations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship. We are confident that your skills and experience will guide us to a fruitful conclusion of our work at this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which is taking place against the backdrop of an international climate that offers the greatest opportunity in four decades to create a safe and sustainable world order. I should also like to felicitate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Our demanding and ambitious task, which is to make a lasting contribution to the security of future generations, has to be viewed both with hope and with concern. The sagacity of the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union has resulted in the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty). The ongoing bilateral Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) have reaffirmed the principle that the road to enhanced security lies through nuclear disarmament and not through the accumulation of nuclear stockpiles. For Europe, there is great hope of progress on the talks relating to conventional armed forces. The confrontational post-war world is slowly giving way to dialogue and discussion and will, we hope, lead to lasting détente and the defusing of tensions. It is the growing acceptance of the need for coexistence

(Mr. Chadha, India)

which gives us cause for optimism; but let optimism not yield to euphoria. The nuclear-arms race set off by the cold war has left behind it a trail of enormous nuclear arsenals amounting today to more than 55,000 nuclear warheads, which equal 1 million times the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb. Until these arsenals are eliminated, the danger persists that an accident, a miscalculation or an irrational act may cause a nuclear holocaust. As Lawrence Freedman sums it up in Evolution of Nuclear Strategy:

> "... the position we have reached is one where stability depends on something that is more the antithesis of strategy than its apotheosis, on threats that things might get out of hand, that we may act irrationally, that possibly through inadvertence we could set in motion a process that in its development and conclusions would be beyond human control and comprehension ... Those who have responsibility for unleashing nuclear arsenals live by the motto that if they ever had to do so, they would have failed."

(Mr. Chadha, India)

For more than a decade, the item relating to the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race, and work on a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament, has remained on our agenda. There has been virtually no progress in spite of the highest priority we accorded to nuclear disarmament at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and now there is the threat that the arms race may be extended to the fourth dimension of space. Of particular concern is the presence of nuclear weapons at sea. Nuclear armed intercontinental ballistic missiles deployed at sea and sea-launched cruise missiles have acquired an unprecedented global reach. Although the proposed strategic arms reduction talks (START) agreement between the United States and the USSR is to be lauded as a step in the right direction, it will result in the elimination of only a negligible percentage of strategic weapons produced during the last decade of intensive modernization. We hope that future negotiations will be undertaken for the destruction of warheads from existing weapons so that nuclear components are not recycled into more modern weapons. If we are to seize the historic opportunity of ridding our planet of the apocalyptic menace of nuclear weapons, serious consideration needs to be given to the attitudes, policies, doctrines, institutions and instruments required for a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is time that we turned our attention to overcoming the vested interests of the critical and catalytic group of the scientific-bureaucratic-military-industrial complex, which is responsible for the doctrinal underpinning of the nuclear-arms race and the unabated development of complex and destructive weapon-systems for its survival. The self-interest of this faceless and powerful constituency has managed to defeat the universal concern expressed at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament that, along with the quantitative aspect, the qualitative aspect of the arms race must also receive attention. It is indeed

(Mr. Chadha, India)

fortunate that the recent upturn in the political climate can, if maintained, give us the breathing time required in which to take control of this runaway escalation in the qualitative arms race. We must ensure that science and technology serve the vision of a peaceful constructive and non-violent world order. It is only with sustained and enlightened political will and dialogue that the current ethos can be transformed.

The agenda item on the declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade is closely related to the concept of a transition to a new non-violent world order. At the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, India enunciated the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free and peaceful world order as a pragmatic and gradualistic programme for nuclear disarmament. This was intended as a contribution to the search for an ideal paradigm for ensuring lasting security for all nations. This progress has to be supported at each stage by proposals for banning other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; for bringing to a halt and reversing the arms race; for using scientific and technological development for the benefit of mankind; for reducing conventional arms and forces to minimum levels required for defence purposes; and for providing the principles for the conduct of international relations in a world free of nuclear weapons. We believe that the time-bound proposals we put forward remain valid for humanity, which now has a chance to create a better world.

Our delegation has expressed its concern on many occasions at the tendency to regard horizontal non-proliferation as an answer to global security. Certain kinds of weapons cannot be indispensable and desirable for the security of a few countries but unnecessary and anathema if possessed by others. The commitment to abolish weapons of mass destruction has to be a universal one and not partial or selective. Horizontal non-proliferation has to be accompanied by vertical and

(Mr. Chadha, India)

spatial non-proliferation and the lead has to be taken by those possessing such weapons. Simultaneous progress has to be made on two parallel tracks: progressive and significant negotiation of concrete disarmament agreements and the ushering in of a new world security order and inter-State relations in which global security is enhanced collectively through co-operative and non-violent means. The areas where progress will have to be made in the last decade of the century are spelled out in our working paper A/CN.10/128, dated 15 May 1989, which was submitted to this body.

The agenda item on the nuclear capability of South Africa has also engaged the Commission's attention for over a decade. It is time that the Commission informed the international community of its considered position on the question of South Africa's nuclear capability. The threat the policies of the South African régime pose to international peace and security demands renewed urgency in our response. By pronouncing itself in clear and unequivocal terms on South Africa's nuclear capability, the Disarmament Commission will not only carry out the recommendations of the General Assembly but also make a contribution to one of the crucial world issues of our times.

The item on conventional disarmament has been on our agenda since 1981. India shares the concern that the continuing arms race is absorbing a heavy proportion of the world's human, financial, natural and technological resources. While keeping in mind the priority accorded to nuclear disarmament, as enunciated in paragraph 45 of the Programme of Action contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, attention also needs to be given to conventional disarmament. We need a global approach, which can ensure the right direction and correct priorities, for progress towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control leading to measures for the limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons. States

(Mr. Chadha, India)

with the largest military arsenals have a special responsibility in this regard. It is not a coincidence that the nuclear-weapon States account for more than 70 per cent of the world's total military expenditure. The approach agreed upon at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is especially relevant today when the arms race seeks to introduce new technologies such as laser-guided weapons and particle-beam weapons into conventional-weapon arsenals, thus changing beyond recognition the characteristics of major weapon systems whether on land, sea or air. The necessary measures should be undertaken in an equitable and balanced manner in order to ensure the right of each State to security and that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage. Any attempt at promoting concepts of linkage between nuclear and conventional weapons would be misleading and would distort the perception established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which will always be valid. This perception is necessary because a conventional war can also escalate into a nuclear war by the use of a single nuclear weapon, but a nuclear war cannot de-escalate into a conventional war, since there is no return from the abyss of a nuclear catastrophe.

(Mr. Chadha, India)

This year we shall be continuing our work on the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The recognition of the growing role of the United Nations in dealing with issues in a multi-polar world is a source of encouragement to India. We believe that all efforts should be made to enable the United Nations to bring about and maintain a comprehensive system of global security.

The role of the United Nations in developing a system of assessment of scientific and technological developments with a view to evaluating their impact on the international security environment will be a significant step forward. It is our conviction that the lack of progress in multilateral disarmament efforts can be overcome with the required political will. It would be unproductive to try to apportion blame for failure on the institutional aspects. The Disarmament Commission has to play a positive role in suggesting ways to strengthen the collective commitment of Member States to the process of multilateral disarmament in conformity with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

For the sake of brevity, I have confined my remarks to the major items on our agenda. Nevertheless, we do attach priority to the consideration of other items too, and we shall express our views in the course of substantive discussions in the appropriate subsidiary bodies.

Mr. KUKAN (Czechoslovakia): I should like to express my delegation's great pleasure at seeing you, Sir, chairing the present session of the Disarmament Commission. Already during the demanding preparatory period for the session, you proved your excellent dedication, patience and firm leadership in guiding all participants towards a common understanding.

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

The Disarmament Commission was revived by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament as a global forum that provides an opportunity for all Member States to take an active part in deliberations on disarmament issues. However, multilateral endeavours aimed at arms limitations and disarmament have been unable ever since, unfortunately, to achieve any remarkable success, despite the overall improvement in the international climate.

This year, the Disarmament Commission convenes in a period of dynamic changes that make it possible in many fields to replace confrontation by integrated efforts. Based on an extended dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union and on increased confidence, a process of genuine disarmament has been set in motion. Considerable results have been achieved in the settling of regional disputes. A closer co-operation between States in meeting the global challenges is taking place. We note with satisfaction that the credit of the United Nations is increasing.

The creative thought and productivity unleashed by democratic transformations enable us to dwell on the issues of disarmament and security with much greater ambitions in many parts of the world than ever before. The modern structure of security must rest on peace, stability and trust. A number of ideas and suggestions exist at present, primarily in the European context, that can help build a truly functional security system that would not drown human and material resources in excessive armament. We therefore hope that the forthcoming summit talks between the United States and the Soviet Union to be held in Washington, D.C., will lead to substantive agreements on strategic as well as conventional armaments, and will create a more favourable situation for a cessation of the arms race and for the elimination of all nuclear and chemical weapons.

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

The positive trends of the current developments in the world should, in our view, be strengthened and expanded to cover the sphere of multilateral disarmament efforts as well. And it is precisely in that context that we see the role of the present session of the Disarmament Commission. All of us together should make the most of the ideas that took shape at last year's sessions of the Commission and the First Committee. Only in this way is it possible to revitalize the Commission's potential for broad international deliberations prior to the commencement of disarmament negotiations in the respective bodies.

The so-called reform programme approved at yesterday's session of the Disarmament Commission constitutes, in our view, a balanced basis for increasing the effectiveness of the Commission in the future. When speaking about a new organization of work, we regard it necessary to stress that the Commissions's agenda contains questions of the utmost urgency for all States. An optimal solution to them can be found only by mutual effort and the greater willingness of all to contribute to consensus.

The Czechoslovak delegation believes that at its current session the Commission will be able to follow up on past positive results. In our judgement, of special significance among the items on our agenda is item 9, "Consideration of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". A concise, realistic and clear-cut document should be the result of our work. At the same time, it should not lack ambition or clear vision. Last year's results constitute a basis for the activity of the Working Group.

The consideration of conventional disarmament under item 8 is a question of special importance for the Czechoslovak Government. The high concentration of conventional forces in Europe and the ensuing risks urge step-by-step disarmament and confidence-building measures. We are convinced that experience gained in that way can have a positive influence on our work.

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

Agenda item 10 - "Objective information on military matters" - will be dealt with at this year's session in its preliminary stages by a consultation group. We hope, however, that these preliminary discussions will provide us with a firm basis for in-depth deliberation next year.

I should like to assure you, Sir, that the delegation of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic will fully assist you in your efforts aimed at a successful course of the 1990s session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. LUNA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation is pleased to see you, Sir, chairing over this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. Your well-known diplomatic skills and wide experience in multilateral negotiations augur well for the success of our important activities here. Our congratulations also go to the other officers of the Commission, and we wish to express our thanks to the Secretariat for its effective help.

Peru has always attached fundamental importance to the Disarmament Commission, not only because it is the sole multilateral disarmament forum open to full participation by all nations - though that in itself is sufficient justification for the body - but also because of the arduous efforts made here to achieve consensus on subjects of great moment for all mankind. That is why we welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 44/119 C, which lays down the foundations for further enhancing the effectiveness of the Commission's work.

(Mr. Luna, Peru)

However, we must also note that our delegation, while prepared to co-operate unreservedly in the successful discharge of the Disarmament Commission's mandate, will nevertheless continue faithfully to support the principle of universality and, thus, the right of all States to participate freely and democratically in substantive negotiations on the very urgent problems of arms limitation and disarmament.

We are firmly convinced that while we need flexibility and agreement when discussing the various approaches to the problem of disarmament, we must not call into question the suitability of multilateral forums for the consideration of problems that have kept all mankind poised on the brink of self-destruction, including the inevitable political component of such issues.

The present climate of détente between the super-Powers and ongoing events in Europe lend a special importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission to declare the 1990s the third United Nations disarmament decade. We hope that the negotiations now beginning on that question will crown the outstanding work done at the previous session.

A review of developments in the 1980s in the field of disarmament and arms limitation must take note of the impressive scientific and technological progress made in the military field, the increase of the arms build-up around the world and the regionalization of armed conflicts, in striking contrast to the growing poverty of the majority of the world's population - to a degree that is an affront to the dignity of mankind.

We must also acknowledge that at the end of the 1980s we witnessed the first firm steps along the path towards peace, democracy and understanding among nations to achieve the shared goal of a safer and more just world. That entails the participation of each and every one of us and will require of the nuclear-weapon

(Mr. Luna, Peru)

and militarily significant States a genuine act of faith in the principles of the United Nations Charter and an abandonment once and for all of the use of force as a tool in international relations.

Nuclear disarmament has been the subject of agreements of considerable political impact. Certain kinds of weapons are now being dismantled and there has been a ban on the deployment of others. Those encouraging signs of understanding must be firmly supported by the international community as a whole, even though the agreements so far implemented in this field are not commensurate with the destructive capability of existing nuclear arsenals.

Nuclear weapons do not discriminate. Any consideration of them must therefore be comprehensive and open-ended. My delegation feels that an agreement on the document before the Commission on this subject will further the just aspirations of all States for collective security consistent with international law and the United Nations Charter.

Conventional disarmament is another subject that requires urgent attention. While some parts of the world are making commendable efforts to reduce the increasingly sophisticated stockpiles of conventional weapons, other regions are the focus of immoral appetites for the profit that can be made from a traffic in suffering, heedless of all save selfish greed. We cannot allow unscrupulous agents in pursuit of their own obscure designs to take advantage of the precarious conditions that exist in developing countries. The illegal traffic in weapons, the most lucrative trade on earth, must now be shunned by the international community. The lives of countless innocent victims demand that that be done.

The Peruvian delegation is convinced that a multilateral, substantive and thorough-going treatment of conventional disarmament will provide the needed framework for the implementation of agreements negotiated at the regional level,

(Mr. Luna, Peru)

for we feel that regional consideration is fundamental to any such disarmament effort. Multilateral consideration of that problem must focus on all aspects and characteristics of the issue. However, negotiations on conventional disarmament must also take into account its inextricable connection with other fields of disarmament and arms limitation.

The entry of Namibia into the concert of free nations and the recent political developments in South Africa give hope to my country while reaffirming its faith in the strength of the United Nations system. We would appeal to all parties concerned to help to accelerate the growth of democracy in South Africa and to do away once and for all with the abhorrent apartheid régime.

My country will therefore continue its firm support for the just cause of our fraternal countries of Africa, particularly the front-line States, and call for a clear and unequivocal condemnation of any steps by the South African Government to acquire and improve its nuclear military capability, which jeopardizes the stability of the African continent and the lives of millions of human beings who, at Cairo in 1964, explicitly rejected the nuclear option as a form of military security.

I do not wish to dwell on the items on the Commission's agenda. My delegation will make a positive contribution to each and every one of them in the working groups and contact groups that are set up for that purpose.

I would, however, like to refer to the importance of the forthcoming meeting of States Parties to the 1963 Moscow Treaty. That international event is clear evidence of the fact that a majority of States view security as a comprehensive, multi-dimensional concept in which military considerations constitute only one factor that must be considered together with social, economic and ecological factors in order to give expression to the genuine desire for peace and freedom that animates the great majority of mankind. We therefore encourage all States

(Mr. Luna, Peru)

Parties to continue their efforts to reach agreements that will enable us successfully to hold the amendment conference in January 1991 and the organizational meeting to be held at the end of this month.

We are sure that that is also the spirit in which to approach the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, of which my country has the honour to act as Chairman. At that Conference the search for complete, unrestricted and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Treaty will be an objective without which the Treaty's régime can have no place in a fair and equitable world.

The spirit that prompts States to take an active part in those two international meetings must also prevail in our work here. We must strive to fulfil our transcendental duty to those who look to us for a more decent and safer world, a world in which future generations will not live under the constant threat of the spectre of total destruction, a world in which the poor countries do not have to spend the vast sums needed for their development on the purchase of military equipment because of conflicts that are frequently created by third parties, a world in which we do not have to watch with grief the growing toll of innocent lives sacrificed to free the world from drugs and terrorism and, lastly, a world in which we hope to see the rich and powerful countries, which have previously pleaded defence requirements, show equal determination and efficiency in channelling resources to the development of other peoples so that we may prevail in the war on poverty, hunger and disease. That will be the great battle, which, when it is finally won, will have earned the gratitude and appreciation of all mankind. What a welcome corollary that will be to the changes in the international system, the dismantling of military alliances and the end to the fratricidal conflicts that have characterized the world in the past.

Dame Ann HERCUS (New Zealand): First, the New Zealand delegation warmly congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, on your election, as well as the other officers of the Commission on their election. We honour your skills, and we assure you of our support and co-operation.

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

I am sure that all delegations assembled here would agree that since the Commission met a year ago astounding changes have taken place on the world scene. In Europe the confrontation and tension between East and West which have preoccupied the international community for over 40 years have given way to a new era of undertanding, co-operation and the identification of shared interests and common concerns. On the African continent Namibia, after years of struggle against apartheid and colonialism, has finally achieved independence and has taken its rightful seat in the community of nations.

Elsewhere, however, the record is somewhat bleaker. In several regions the seeds of conflict still threaten to germinate into war. Military and non-military security issues remain substantially unresolved.

Overall, though, the outlook for the 1990s - the Third Disarmament Decade - is a promising one. Following the path-breaking Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - further major breakthroughs are possible in the East-West arena. The whole world looks forward to the conclusion of the treaties now being negotiated on reducing strategic arms and conventional forces in Europe as evidence of the super-Powers' commitment to enhancing international security through disarmament. The prospect of early talks on short-range nuclear weapons in Europe is also most welcome. Such measures, along with the confidence-building measures now being negotiated in Europe, will represent a major contribution to world security as a whole.

But in acknowledging the positive developments evident on the disarmament scene in recent years, it is also sobering to reflect on the limited progress made by the Disarmament Commission over the same period. Indeed, it appeared to many delegations at the conclusion of last year's session that the Disarmament Commission had virtually come to a standstill. That is all too regrettable, for

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

with the Conference on Disarmament unable to reach its full potential on all issues but one the Disarmament Commission holds an important role for progress in the multilateral disarmament process. And if the 1990s, as the Third Disarmament Decade, are to be meaningful for the majority of the world's nations, the revitalizing of the multilateral process must have high priority.

The New Zealand Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, the Honourable Fran Wilde, expressed a view that I think was shared by many members of the Commission when she told the First Committee last year that the Disarmament Commission would not be regarded as an important forum for much longer if it did not produce results. The Minister went on to outline new procedures which were needed if the Commission was not to slip into paralysis and irrelevance. Most important, it needed to adopt procedures designed to facilitate a revision and updating of its agenda. If consensus could not be found on a series of recommendations after consideration for a number of years, it was suggested that the varying points of view should be recorded by the presiding officer of the subsidiary body and the item taken off the agenda.

The suggestions for reform of the Disarmament Commission raised by New Zealand and other delegations last year culminated in the adoption at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of resolution 44/119 C. The adoption of that consensus resolution must be viewed as a major breakthrough.

My delegation considers that the major challenge of this session will be to ensure that the promise of revitalization made in resolution 44/119 C is fulfilled. We should not underestimate the magnitude of the task before us over the next few weeks. But from my discussions with delegations I have the feeling that there is appreciation of the need to work constructively and tirelessly at this session towards the achievement of the reform objectives of resolution 44/119 C.

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

At this year's session, the Disarmament Commission will have seven substantive items on its agenda. Many of those items have been on the Commission's agenda for several years. We should concentrate our efforts on working co-operatively to achieve a satisfactory conclusion of our deliberations on those items. It is perhaps instructive for our future work in the Disarmament Commission to consider why these items have remained on the agenda for so long. In New Zealand's view, some of these items have been of a far too general character, involving a diverse range of difficult issues, to hold out the promise of an agreed conclusion within a reasonable time frame. I am not saying the Commission should steer clear of difficult issues, but I think we need to think carefully before including broad as opposed to specific and manageable issues on the agenda in the future. A more refined focus might hold out greater promise of progress.

I should now like to comment briefly on four items on the current agenda to which the delegation of New Zealand attaches particular importance.

First and foremost, there is item 7, "Naval armaments and disarmament". New Zealand shares the increasing international concern about the implications of sea-borne weapons. The issue is one of particular importance to New Zealand given our geographical position in the middle of an ocean-covered hemisphere. There have been some positive signs on this issue in recent times. We have been encouraged by the decision of the United States to phase out some categories of sea-borne nuclear weapons, and we ask others to consider similar measures.

The Disarmament Commission's consultative group on naval arms has in previous years noted the interrelationships between maritime and land forces. With greatly improved prospects for land-based arms control between East and West, New Zealand believes that naval arms control can no longer be neglected. Clearly, as all

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

delegations present here appreciate, the issue is a sensitive one. But the potential for naval arms control to enhance the security of all States should not be ignored.

The focus lies at present on the need for confidence-building measures at sea. Recently at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and also at previous sessions of this Commission, Sweden has called for naval confidence-building measures and modernization of the law of sea warfare. New Zealand thinks those suggestions should be addressed further. In particular, I wish to draw attention to the proposal for a multilateral incidents-at-sea agreement. That might have particular application in parts of the world where the naval situation is multi-polar. The subject of naval confidence-building measures may merit further consideration by this Commission in future years.

Increased dialogue on naval armaments and naval arms control would also in itself constitute an important confidence-building measure. The possibilities and practicalities of naval arms control have yet to be adequately canvassed. In this regard, we think the seminars to be held in Denmark and Bulgaria later this year under the auspices of the World Disarmament Campaign will provide a useful opportunity for a constructive exchange of views on the topic.

Turning to item 8, on conventional disarmament, we hope that the more favourable international disarmament climate will contribute to a more satisfactory outcome this year. New Zealand advocates that consideration be given at this session to ways and means of halting the conventional arms race and promoting a balanced reduction of conventional forces, resulting in enhanced security for all States.

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

As in Europe, the high priority justifiably attached to nuclear disarmament should be complemented by significant conventional disarmament measures. But conventional armaments by themselves pose a major threat to security in many parts of the world. While the conventional forces in Europe experience may not be of direct application to other regions, consideration of it could help in the development of broadly acceptable guidelines which could be modified and adapted to individual regional circumstances.

We appreciate, however, that, given the diverse and complicated nature of the issues that arise under the conventional disarmament item, it may be unrealistic to expect to achieve such a broad consensus. We may therefore need to turn our minds to concentrating future deliberations in the Disarmament Commission on specific aspects of the issue of conventional disarmament rather than the issue as a whole. For example, the issue of arms transfers comes up repeatedly in our deliberations on the conventional disarmament item. It is at present the subject of a United Nations study. Once the conclusions of the study have been issued it may be appropriate for the Disarmament Commission to take up this issue directly.

In regard to the item on the 1990s as the United Nations Third Disarmament Decade, my delegation takes this opportunity to express its appreciation to Ambassador Roche of Canada for the determined efforts he made last year to seek a compromise solution. The working paper submitted by him at last year's session remains in our view a useful starting-point for this year's deliberations. We would hope that all delegations would work to facilitate the consensus adoption of the text at this session.

Finally, I should like to comment briefly on the new item on the Disarmament Commission's agenda this year - "Objective information on military matters". New Zealand considers that greater openness and understanding concerning military

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

activities undertaken around the world would constitute an important confidence-building measure.

This principle has been reflected in the verification arrangements being made for major arms control treaties, as well as in the proposal for an open skies régime among some States.

The principle of openness has a much wider application, however. An important contribution would be made if all Member States were to complete the Secretary-General's standardized reporting instrument on military expenditures. In addition, the publication and dissemination of national policy papers on defence and security issues should also be encouraged. New Zealand subscribes to both those measures.

This year's deliberations will be crucial to the prospects for progress in multilateral disarmament and the United Nations role therein. The easing of East-West tensions has given us the opportunity to make real progress in resolving some important issues and revitalizing the multilateral process. But this will be possible only if a constructive approach is adopted by all delegations in order to avoid the intractable debate which in the past has led to the Commission's paralysis to which my Minister referred last year. That remains the major challenge of this session.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The delegation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic welcomes you, Sir, in your important post as Chairman of the Commission for this session. We know you and regard you highly as an experienced diplomat. Our delegation trusts that your great professional abilities and diplomatic skills will foster the success of the Commission's work at this session and help establish a firm foundation for our future activities here. That is particularly important today, at this watershed in the Commission's work.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

We are also happy to greet the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Akashi, whose significant contribution to promoting disarmament is universally recognized.

Since the 1989 session important positive trends have gained ground in the world. Military and other means of ensuring national security are now yielding to political and economic means. There is a productive dialogue between East and West on a broad range of crucial issues regarding the international situation, and a level of mutual understanding has been achieved. That gives us ground for talking about our having gone beyond the cold war era.

Proof of what I have said is to be found in the changes taking place in disarmament matters. Considerable progress has been made on such an important matter as curbing the arms race. We have seen the elaboration of the Treaty reducing strategic offensive weapons by 50 per cent. The Treaty, which is working well, provides for the full elimination of Soviet and American nuclear missiles with a range of from 500 to 5,500 kilometres, launch vehicles and related equipment and facilities.

We can also see a breakthrough in the joint approach taken by the Soviet Union and the United States to prohibiting and destroying chemical weapons. In our view, that can have a very positive impact on the conclusion of preparations for a convention on chemical weapons prohibiting the development, production and use of chemical weapons and ensuring the destruction of all stockpiles throughout the world.

There is now virtual agreement on the question of the protocols to the Treaties of 1974 and 1976 between the Soviet Union and the United States on nuclear tests.

In talking about positive trends in disarmament, we cannot fail to mention Europe. There is now tangible progress at the Vienna talks; we have virtually worked out the basic parameters on a future agreement covering such important

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

components of the armed forces as personnel, aircraft, helicopters, tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery. The Soviet-American agreement on reducing the number of American and Soviet troops on foreign territory in the central part of Europe to 195,000 and the beginning of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia and Hungary have been important elements stimulating progress in those talks.

We believe that we should reach a point at which armed forces in Europe become increasingly defensive. All European States, particularly those with a large military potential, must accept the doctrine of defensive sufficiency.

We hope that the forthcoming meeting between President Gorbachev and President Bush will continue from where Malta left off; we hope that they will move ahead in disarmament and many other areas and that it will be a significant meeting, leading to important, specific results.

The level of mutual understanding between East and West in disarmament matters is bringing the question of confidence to the forefront. Accordingly, we must now establish a system of reliable and comprehensive verification. In that connection, it would be difficult to attach too much importance to the efforts to implement the idea of open skies. We believe that implementing an open skies régime would help strengthen confidence between States, reduce the risk of conflict and enhance predictability of military activities. It is important that the régime be established on a mutual, just basis, without being detrimental to the interests of any State, and that as many countries as possible, particularly European countries, participate in it.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

We also believe that openness cannot be selective or limited: it must apply everywhere. Such a system could be extended not only to the skies but also to land, the seas, the oceans and space. That was confirmed by a United Nations seminar on multilateral confidence-building measures and measures to prevent war, held in Kiev in 1989. It confirmed that the new generation wants those confidence-building measures, which are essential to future security.

Naturally the delegation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic does realize that many problems lying on the road to disarmament have still to be resolved, but that is not grounds for pessimism. Rather it should stimulate us to greater efforts to seek solutions that would take account of the interests of all parties and lead to mutually acceptable solutions. The United Nations must play an important role in this process, and that is a point we have often made. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic advocates full and efficient utilization of the United Nations disarmament machinery. In this connection we attach great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission.

Today we are starting a new stage in our work: the implementation of the recommendations made by the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. This opens up new prospects for our Commission and it can make our work more productive. In those circumstances the political will of the Member States becomes particularly significant. The Ukrainian delegation hopes that the political will will be fully demonstrated at this session, which is to conclude consideration of a whole range of extremely important disarmament issues. It would be hard, and indeed not really a good idea, to highlight any of these issues, for disarmament, like security, should brook no exceptions, accept no flaws. It must be comprehensive, simultaneous and indivisible. Of course that does not mean that we cannot set priorities. The path to a secure world leads primarily through nuclear

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

disarmament and the reduction of arms to a minimum sufficiency level, followed by their complete elimination.

We are realists, and we understand that this needs time, but we have to think already of what will happen after the conclusion of the strategic offensive weapons treaty and how we can continue to reduce the level of strategic weapons, at the same time ensuring strategic stability. That is a task of our times, and it is a task facing us.

The same would also apply to naval armaments. The destabilizing role of naval armaments has increased considerably, although we have begun the process of the reduction of conventional weapons. The Ukrainian delegation hopes that, despite the complexity of these issues, the good atmosphere at this session, the stepping up of our joint political will and the desire to reach compromise solutions will lead to positive results.

I should like to comment briefly on another item on our agenda. I refer to consideration of the United Nations role in disarmament. We regret that in 1989 the Commission was not able to prepare joint, agreed recommendations on this matter. There is an urgent need, in particular given the conditions of this growing peace-making role of the United Nations, to make its contribution more tangible and real. At this session we should focus on the essence of the issue and do away with secondary, minor issues that have delayed us for so long. A basis for the successful conclusion of our work does exist, we believe. We have had many valuable ideas and suggestions over the year and various acceptable formulations have been made. We have to make use of what we have accumulated. We have to work together.

Our delegation has tried to sum up the ideas and specific wordings. We have tried to make them clear, precise, terse and concise and to remove all ambiguity. We intend to submit the result in the relevant working group.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Our approach to objective information on military matters has been set forth in the answer submitted by the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic to the Secretary-General's questionnaire. The dissemination of balanced and objective information on military matters would, we believe, help to reduce international tension, strengthen trust between States at all levels and promote and facilitate the process of drafting agreements on disarmament.

We believe that openness and transparency, effective verification and monitoring, along with strengthening confidence, will open the path to major reductions in arms and troops, clear the ground and remove military conflicts. We believe in constructive and businesslike discussion of this matter at this session.

The same would apply to consideration of the declaration on proclaiming the 1990s the third disarmament decade. We believe that would help us to move ahead in the entire disarmament process. We believe it would be a real impetus at the bilateral, regional, international and transnational levels.

We also believe that a real breakthrough must be made in our work on the question relating to the nuclear potential of South Africa. Taking account of the changes occurring in South Africa, there is growing importance for joint efforts to be made by the international community in order to remove any nuclear threat from that region. A successful conclusion on working out agreed recommendations in this Commission could be a contribution to solving this problem.

May I once again express my hope that this session, which is a kind of watershed in the work of the Commission, will live up to the hopes placed in it.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.